City of Newport Planning Commission Minutes
Tuesday, April 5, 2022

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Members Present:

John Monette, Chair
Denis Chenette, Vice-Chair
Amanda (Mandy) Chaput, Secretary
Carole O'Connell
Kevin Mead

Guests:

Alison Lowe, NVDA
Laura Dolgin, City Manager

1. **Call to Order:** Chair Monette called the meeting called to order at 6:08pm.
2. **Approval of the Minutes** of the Tuesday, March 15, 2022, Planning Commission Meeting. Mr. Chenette motioned to accept the minutes with Ms. O'Connell seconding. Ms. Lowe asked for a clarification regarding the mention of the homeless community not wanting to leave the area. The reply was that the commission heard the guest speakers explain that even when presented with options, many in the homeless community did not want to leave this area. Minutes were approved unanimously.
3. **Public Comment:** None
4. **Review of Newport City Five Year Capital Investment Plan.** Planning Commissions' objective is to review for any items that might stand out. Ms. Dolgin reviewed the approval process and timeline. The plan covers long term budgeting for major projects that are beyond the operational budget. Two public hearings are scheduled: May 2 & June 6. The plan covers 2022 -2027. The plan and process ensure that expenditures are necessary and fair to the taxpayers, who expect a certain level of service and quality. Taxpayers are more apt to accept the plan if the increase in costs are small incremental steps and result in high quality. Ms. O'Connell inquired about bonds. Two recent approved votes have taken place: one took place in 2021 for the water tower on the east side in the amount of $4.985M. In March, the voters approved the purchase a new fire truck with a price tag of not to exceed $800K. The water tower is an eligible project to use the ARPA funds thereby offsetting those costs to the rate payers.
5. **City Development Plan**: The commission members reviewed the Downtown Connectivity section line by line and made observations of wording and intent. The AARP audit makes recommendations for pedestrian and vehicle traffic to flow better. For example, there may be an opportunity to conduct a 'road diet' on the 4-lane section of road by 1 Main St and Pomerleau Park to test flow and ability of efficiency. The last sentence on paragraph 4, page 3 will be slightly edited to frame the positive. Paint demarcation or crosswalks in expanded stretches adjacent to roads such as in the Indian Point St/Elm St./Maple St area would be helpful so that parking areas and access points are clearly marked with safe walking areas. This should be noted when the bylaw modernization project gets underway to ensure safe walkability, and we want to be sure to mention the use of wheelchairs on sidewalks. Ms. O'Connell was chosen as an alternate for the RCT Board.

   The update has two more sections to review and the appendences. More meetings are needed to finish the process as well as allow for one more guest speaker, which the commission determined they would be interested to hear from Jenna's Promise in Lamoille County. A book

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entitled "Unstitched" is about opioid addiction and this is the same family. The model is interesting in that people in recovery are providing services to café and store patrons as a means of the recovery process. Housing is also a vital instrument as a safe and stable environment to heal. Commission believes that it would be educational and instrumental in our development of the City Plan to properly and respectfully address addiction issues in the city plan. Community is a large part of the recovery process.

Commission discussed anticipated meetings needed to accomplish this goal. Ms. Lowe will send an update to the commission.

6. **Old Business:** Bylaw Modernization Grant...RFQ process. Ms. Dolgin reports that two responses have been received and both have moved along to the interview process. The review committee with be comprised of Chris Vachon of the City Council, Carole O'Connell of the Planning Commission, Alison Lowe of NVDA, John Harlamert from the DRB, and the city manager The RFQ timeline requires the chosen consultant to be selected by April 18, and ready to begin no later than April 25, 2022. Ms. Lowe reminds the Commission of the community summit presentation on June 16 and notes both projects will be concurrent until the Municipal Plan is adopted by the Regional Planning Commission.

   Ms. Dolgin will reconstitute the original zoning administrator vetting committee to determine next steps.

7. **New Business:** None
8. Set a draft agenda for the next regularly scheduled Planning Commission Meeting on Tuesday, April 19, 2022 at 6:00pm. Agenda will be similar to the agenda for tonight with the exception of not including Capital Investment Plan.
   Mr. Mead will not be at present at the next meeting as he will be out of town.
9. **Adjourn.** Motion made to adjourn by Mr. Chenette and seconded by Ms. O'Connell at 8:08pm

Respectfully Submitted by Amanda (Mandy) Chaput, Secretary
Unofficial Until Approved

Approved this _____day of _____, 2022

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Chair, City of Newport Planning Commission